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SECURITY INFORMATION

CIA Progress Report, October 1950 to December 1951
Section IV, 7, Specific Problems of the separate offices
OPR Problem 1, Organization of existing information

The identifying of relevant information and its organization into usable form is probably the first "housekeeping" problem in any intelligence field. While this problem in Soviet economic intelligence is intensified by the variety of contexts in which bits of information occur, the wide separation of these bits in time and place, and their very number, it is also true that the peculiar complexity and interrelationship of economic factors — for example, the series of coal to iron ore to steel to guns — offer hope for fruitful solution of this priority problem.

A modern economy cannot function without peeling off fragments of evidence of a most positive, concrete nature, which, regardless of the precautions taken by the operators of that economy, cannot fail to give, if only the fragments can be identified and arranged, an accurate picture of the economy in operation. The difficulty lies in finding all the fragments, and, even more, in putting them together in proper cross-referenced form so as to summon up the original context of activity and account for the missing gaps.

The American gift for mechanization in licking its problems of organization has been woefully lacking in efforts to tackle the crucial problems of intelligence on a sufficient scale. Economic-intelligence processors are not in a position to lay out their precise requirements for field collection when they cannot appraise the information already existing in US Government files and other repositories. This body of

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information exists in tens of millions of documents, classified and unclassified. Significantly large volumes of books on the Soviet economy, in the original Russian, remain unexploited and unreferenceable; millions of reports reflecting economic evidence in classified material within the intelligence community are not readily accessible. The present lack of facilities for "capturing" these materials means that it is impossible to bring together in focus all the elements bearing on any single problem, to say nothing of the Soviet economy as a whole.

ORR and the economic intelligence community as a whole need much broader support from "housekeeping" facilities. American organizational genius must be specifically directed toward final location, abstracting, cataloguing, cross-referencing, and generally making available the vast amount of existing information on the economy of the Soviet area. While something is being done now, those responsible need greater administrative support and an enlarged charter if they are to proceed properly.

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